

Congressman attacks use of foreign gold

By Roger Boye

A congressman has criticized the U.S. Treasury's decision to use foreign-mined gold in American Eagle bullion coins.

"I am issuing [a] consumer alert so that Americans will be aware that these gold coins, which say 'United States of America' on them, may not really be American," said Rep. Frank Annunzio [D-Ill.], chairman of the House Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage.

Federal law instructs the Treasury to buy newly mined domestic gold for the coins or to use gold from U.S. reserves. But officials also have obtained some of the metal they need from other countries.

Uncle Sam acquires the foreign gold only when new U.S.-mined ore is unavailable, according to a U.S. Mint spokesman. Such purchases help guarantee an efficient and profitable American Eagle program.

But Annunzio contends the purpose of the Gold Bullion Coin Act was to enable investors to purchase U.S.-mined metal. Subcommittee members may ask Treasury executives about the foreign gold at an April 7 congressional hearing in Washington.



Sometime this spring Uncle Sam will print the first "greenbacks" sporting new anti-counterfeiting devices, according to a government spokesperson.

"We'll start with the \$50 and \$100 notes—possibly in April—and gradually work our way down to the \$1s by late in the year or early 1988," said Susanne Howard, an assistant to U.S. Treasurer Katherine D. Ortega. New bills normally enter circulation in two to five months after printing, depending on bank demand.

The series 1987 Federal Reserve notes will have microprinting around the center portraits and a clear polyester thread embedded into the paper, subtle changes that are expected to make U.S. money more difficult to duplicate on color copying machines.